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CURRENT LITERATURE.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The water-lilies

THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION has published a sumptuous volume bearing the above title.¹ Mr. CONARD, the author, is a Senior Fellow in Botany at the University of Pennsylvania, and has spent four years in the preparation of this monograph. The purpose seems to be to present water-lilies from every botanical standpoint; and so far as this can be done by one man making most diligent use of his time it has been well done. The conception that research is the exhaustive study of a single form, and that all observations should be reported whether pertinent to anything or not, is well exemplified in this volume. The diligence it has demanded is beyond praise; the ideas directing it are questionable. The following statement in the preface is significant: "had the learned doctor (CAS-PARY) of Königsberg assembled his vast knowledge into one connected whole, the present work would be needed chiefly as a translation." As this implies, the volume is the assembling of a vast amount of information about water-lilies; and the scope of it is expressed by the following statement: "It has therefore seemed important to bring together the knowledge of the genus in all of its botanical relations and in its bearings on human life and history."

It is questionable whether any one man is equipped to do this as a contribution; he may do it as a compilation. Just here is the vital difference between research and collected information. It is unfortunate that many who are directing research do not make the distinction. It would reduce publications in bulk and save an immense amount of time consumed in discovering the contribution. In the present work, for example, there have doubtless been made some real and valuable contributions to botany, but there is no way of discovering them without looking through nearly three hundred large pages.

There are eight parts in the volume, each presenting water-lilies from a distinctly different point of view, as follows: (1) history, including oriental literature as well as pre-Linnaean literature; (2) structure, which is for the most part anatomy; (3) development, by which is meant what is usually considered under morphology; (4) physiology; (5) taxonomy; (6) distribution; (7) hybrids and garden varieties; and (8) culture and uses. The taxonomy must have been in a fairly good condition, except perhaps as to nomenclature, for of the thirty-four species recognized only one is described by the author as new.

The thirty plates are works of art, twelve of them being colored. It is a gratification to know that the Carnegie Institution has money enough to spend in this lavish way.—J. M. C.

¹ CONARD, HENRY S., *The water-lilies, a monograph of the genus Nymphaea.* 4to. pp. xiii+279. *pls. 30. figs. 82.* The Carnegie Institution of Washington. 1905.